

## DUALITY OF THE MIND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May I trespass on your space for the purpose of rectifying an error as to the nature and object of my paper on the duality of the brain,—an error arising from the change in some parts from the third person to the first, made by the transcriber, I presume, for the purpose of rendering the whole more continuous.

I expressly stated that it was part only of the introductory chapter of a work I was preparing for the press; that I only made assertions and did not offer proofs, for which one, or even half a dozen evenings, would not suffice; that I did not ask for assent till a graduated series of evidence should make it impossible to withhold it; and that my object was only to excite attention and record the theory, that no other person might claim a priority therein. Of course the objections raised had no meaning, for the parties could not possibly know what they were opposing.

The facts and inferences I have to bring forward form a mass of proof so superabundant that I cannot conceive it possible they should fail of producing conviction. As to the novelty, it cannot be questioned, since there is not a single writer in this or any other country of Europe, who has given the remotest hint on the subject, if, indeed, Dr. Holland be not, to a certain extent, an exception. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. L. WIGAN.

London, April 20, 1844.

## THE NON-DUALITY OF THE BRAIN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—An article in last week's LANCET, headed "Duality of the Mind Proved," &c., has arrested my attention, and with a true spirit of philosophic inquiry I take the matter up, hoping that the author will satisfactorily account for a certain phenomenon, hereafter to be related, which appears to me to be a very strong proof of the non-duality of the mind.

At page 39 (commencing at the fifth line from the bottom) the author says, "The two hemispheres of the brain are, strictly, two distinct and perfect organs, at least as distinct, and each respectively as perfect as the two eyes." He means that the hemispheres are distinct and perfect organs in the performance of their *mental* functions, as may be seen in his fourteenth proposition, where he compares the functions of both hemispheres to the eyes. He says that "one cerebrum may be entirely destroyed," &c., "may be annihilated, yet the mind remain quite perfect, as at any former period, and capable of exercising its functions in the same manner and to the same extent that one eye is capable of exercising the faculty of vision, when its fellow is injured or destroyed." I doubt that its *complete and entire destruction* ever happened, that is to say, that the hemisphere has been destroyed *in toto*, to the very origin of the nerves.

But now to the point of objection as to the mind's duality. How is it that an *immediate* comatose state supervenes in depression of the skull on one small portion of a hemisphere, and on removal of that pressure, that the mind's activity returns? To elucidate the matter more fully I shall quote Sir Astley Cooper on the subject of depression. He says, "In order to ascertain whether the symptoms arising from depression would come on *immediately* after the accident, I tried the following experiment:—I applied the trephine to the cranium of a dog, and took out a portion of the bone; I then separated the dura mater from the bone; for I found that I could make no impression on the brain until I had done so, and then pressed upon it with my finger. At first the animal did not seem to feel it, but, upon pressing more deeply, it produced pain and irritation. Upon still increasing the pressure he became comatose and fell; I kept him in that state for five or six minutes, when, upon removing my finger, he got up apparently little worse for the operation."

Now this seems to me to prove the mind's non-duality or synchronous mental action of both hemispheres, or

why should *complete* insensibility be induced in the aforementioned case of compression? It may be said that the depressing power was transmitted to the other hemisphere, or that the depressing power had acted on the circulation of the blood, and so affected the cerebral mass; but such ideas are not admissible when we consider the soft and yielding substance of which the brain is composed. It may be likewise said that the other hemisphere sympathises with the one compressed; but if it so far sympathises as to annul its power of receiving impressions, then it can no longer be said to act independent, as in the case of the eyes. One eye may be injured or cut out without destroying the function of the other *completely*, though it may suffer much from sympathy; but such does not seem to be the case respecting the hemispheres of the brain.

We know that considerable portions of a hemisphere have been lost, and complete mental activity remain; but still this goes but a little way to prove the mind's duality. Nay, we have reason to suppose that portions of *both* hemispheres have been lost and complete mental activity remain, when we read Sir A. Cooper's case of transverse fracture (opening rather) of the os frontis, where a considerable portion of brain was lost, related in his lectures under the head, "Wound of the Brain," although Dr. Wigan says that the least injury of both hemispheres is incompatible with mental activity.

Hoping to be more enlightened on the subject through the medium of your valuable journal, I remain, Sir, your's very respectfully,

MICHAEL RYAN, M.R.C.S.

Ashley, Market Drayton, Salop,  
April, 6, 1844.

## VITILIGO INFANTILIS.\*

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me to make a few remarks on the case of vitiligo infantilis, as it is one of unusual interest; first, from the novelty of the disease attacking so young a subject and so very extensively; secondly, from the incorrect diagnosis formed of it by the author of the notes, and by many others who had an unusual opportunity of judging correctly of it. The proper time, I must acknowledge, for making my strictures, was when the child was exhibited to the members of the Medical and Chirurgical Society; but not being present is my excuse for omitting to do so.

May I ask, how was it that the authors on cutaneous diseases, who were present, and had presented to them a living case, thereby removing any doubts, as simply the notes or histories of cases are frequently calculated to do, were silent? At the nick of time they might have proved the value of their authority, and, no doubt, from the profession, in due time, would have reaped the fruits of it.

Dr. Gregory, in his notes, says the disease commenced at four months old, with some smooth, white, shining elevations. Now, if we substitute the word tubercles for elevations, we have Dr. Willan's definition of the commencement of vitiligo, which will not do, unfortunately, for the present case; and as it had existed fourteen months when the Doctor first examined it, he is not prepared to prove that it did begin so, nor by information derived from the mother. If I am correctly informed, Dr. A. T. Thomson, after comparing the case with numerous plates, inferred that it must be vitiligo (the word derived from "vituli," the white and glistening appearance bearing some resemblance to the flesh of calves); the present case does not even tally with the simple definition of the name. Dr. Gregory candidly tells us that his notions of the disease were very confused, not having seen one before; therefore he must excuse my contradicting and stating that the disease rather commenced with small round elevations, remaining for some little time stationary in their growth, and at this stage of the disease requiring the eye of a connoisseur to discriminate it from the commencement of lepra; but practical experience will readily afford the proper clue, for as the disease progresses the pathognomonic character of the true class to which

\* Properly, Erythema Sulcatum.